



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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IM Weekly Highlights



- Glendive Mayor Jerry Jimison, Madison County Commissioner Jim Hart, and Missoula City Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Logan attended the NACo Interoperability Communications Policy Forum with the IM Executive Director this week in Mobile, Alabama.
- Roger Smith, IM Radio System Administrator successfully resolved a trunking issue this week at the Mount Royal site.
- Guidance for the Border Interoperability Demonstration Grant (BIDG) was released on Thursday. More information is available at www.grants.gov.

IM Leaders Appear on *Face the State* TV Program

By Ian Marquand marquand.im@gmail.com

IM First Vice-Chair Joe Brenneman and Northern Tier Project Director Wayne Dusterhoff were guests on "Face the State," the half-hour Sunday morning interview program seen on affiliates of "Montana's News Station." Their interview with KRTV news reporter Kay Rossi was taped on Tuesday, Feb. 23 at the KRTV studios in Great Falls.

Brenneman and Dusterhoff answered a wide range of questions about the IM project, including its origin, its benefits to emergency services and its price tag. They also spoke of upcoming planning efforts and last year's outreach program.

Brenneman also appeared in his capacity as a Flathead County

Commissioner and chair of the Montana Association of Counties' (MACo) new Interoperability Committee. He was in Great Falls to attend MACo's mid-winter meetings. Dusterhoff, who is Sheriff of Glacier County, drove from Cut Bank to be on the program.

The interview, which will be shown on Montana's CBS television affiliates, is scheduled to air on Sunday, April 25 at 9:30 am. However, that date could change if an opportunity arises to broadcast the segment earlier.

IM Technical Committee Tackles Tough Issues

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Members of the IM Technical Committee (IMTC) tackled a number of issues at their Mon., Feb. 22 meeting in Helena. Dan Sullivan, Public Safety Services Bureau, explained the state Chief Information Officer's adoption of the AES 256 technical encryption standard and the process for submitting a Policy Instrument Waiver Request asking for permission to remain on the DES-OFB standard while working toward a migration to the new standard. He noted that the SAFECOM FY10 DHS grant guidance states that the AES standard is "strongly recommended" as the federal standard for DHS grant applications.

The Committee discussed the need for the IM to utilize DES-OFB while making future plans to adopt the AES standard. A state waiver in the name of IM provides incentive to federal and state users to come under the IM umbrella so they don't have to each go

through individual waiver processes. Potentially, the IM Project will be in a better position to receive Homeland Security funds because it has made reasonable accommodations, has documented the issue, and has been granted a waiver by the State.

Technology also was discussed. Higher-end radios come with both the AES and DES



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encryption, but may still need to be flash upgraded. An overall plan with an estimate of the number radios affected will be needed to compile a fully-developed migration plan. Members passed a motion to have Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, submit a formal waiver for the IM to remain on the DES-OFB standard, ***Members passed a motion to . . . submit a formal waiver for the IM to remain on the DES-OFB standard, acknowledging that the IM's long-term goal is to move toward AES.***

Scott Bradford, Frequency Sub-Committee Chair, reported on a Motorola issue with self-quieting frequencies, which may potentially impact IM operations. Replacement frequencies are now needed for two Northern Tier sites, and one in Lewis and Clark County. He is initiating frequency searches and will be working with Motorola to resolve the issue.

Garrett Fawaz, Maintenance Cost Ad-Hoc Committee Chair, reported that he and Kyle Hilmer, ITSD Policy and Planning Bureau, will be giving an informational briefing about maintenance costs to the IM Project Directors on March 9. Garrett also reported that state agencies will be using the CASM inventory system, and a group is working on scheduling CASM training sessions around the state for local jurisdictions.

In other business, members reviewed and approved revised best practices for Self-Supporting Communications Towers as well Concrete Pads. Members learned that the BLM permit on the Belle Prairie site for the second master controller has been signed and the IM is in the process of signing a three-month contract extension on trunking system monitoring. They also reviewed and approved moving DIR 142 that heightens the priority of the Boulder Hill site. DIR 142 will be forwarded to the IM Finance Committee, with cost amendments provided by IM project management. Members also discussed the PSIC Strategic Technology Reserve and other grant ideas.

The next meeting is scheduled for Mon., March 22, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, at the MACo offices, 2715 Skyway Drive, in Helena.

City of Billings Consultant Meets With Big Sky 11

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

Lex Rutter, Lead Project Consultant for GeoComm, met with the Big Sky 11 Consortium technical committee and board on Thurs., Feb. 25, during the regularly scheduled consortium meeting. The City of Billings, through GeoComm, performed a communications assessment in July 2009 to evaluate the various needs of the city and to propose strategies

for replacing the current communications system. GeoComm is now providing assistance with design and procurement options. GeoComm will continue to meet with the City of Billings, consortia members and various vendors throughout the next few months and meet again with consortium and IM Technical Committee members in April.

IM Technical Committee representatives discussed important issues regarding City of Billings' system design and coverage requirements, and points of interface with Big Sky 11 and the IM system. They will provide consortium members with additional information regarding moving funding for the Dunn Mountain site to the Fox site, or similar, due to subsidence issues at Dunn Mountain caused by mining underneath the site. This mining activity prevents Dunn Mountain from being built in the near future. A move to a proposed location will still allow the IM project to provide microwave connectivity to Eastern Montana and provide Billings with a key communications site.

Consortia members also discussed the IM proposal to fund the previously planned Highway 212 project, which will connect the Billings region, the Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations, and the Highway 212 region through Big Sky 11 and the Eastern Tier. This proposal was previously listed as a priority for the consortium.

The next Big Sky 11 meeting is scheduled for March 25 at the Billings EOC, 2305 8th Ave. N., with the technical committee meeting at 8:30 am and the consortium meeting at 10:00 am.

Upcoming Meetings

• Thurs., March 4

Northern Tier

Havre • 9:00 am - noon

Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.

• Mon., March 8

IM Finance Committee (IMFC)

Helena • 9:00 am - noon

Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

• Mon., March 8

IM Governance Committee (IMGC)

Helena • 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

• Tues., March 9

IM Project Directors (IMPD)

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Drive

• Wed., March 10

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)

Great Falls • 10:00 am

Disaster & Emergency Services Office
521 1st St. NW

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